

THE
PARADOX:
OR, AN
ARGUMENT

That we are
In Danger of *POPEERY*.

In some late Conferences on
that SUBJECT.



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Advertisement.

MR. Lowman, who writes the following Account of some late Conferences upon the Subject of the Danger (he thinks) we are in of Popery, takes upon him only his own Part in it; which is but reasonable, as the Deist does in his Conference with the Atheist, and the Christian with the Deist. Mr. Freeborn, and Mr. Churchill, will, no doubt, charge themselves with theirs, if ever the Truth come to be known, which all Three have agreed to conceal, as they do their true Names: If the Writer has wrong'd any of the other Two, thro' Mistake, or want of Memory, he is ready to beg their Pardon, and do them Justice.





THE
P A R A D O X

First Conference.

S I R,

SINCE you will needs have it so,
I'll be as good as my Word, in
sending you, to the best of my
Memory, an exact Account of
what passed in Town, at our free
Conferences, as you call'd them; now that I
am at leisure, and quiet in the Country, and
that the Accounts, which your Friends have
given you, are you say confus'd, and not at
all satisfactory.

You may remember, that the Business of
Thorn being then the ordinary Subject of Con-
versation, I took occasion in Discourse to say

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That I had been told by Divines of my Acquaintance, that the Prophecies in Scripture, not yet accomplish'd, do intimate, or rather plainly bear, that before the fulness of the *Gentiles*, and the coming in of the *Jews*; nay, before the overthrow of the Kingdom of *Antichrist*, and the downfall of *Babylon*, there was to be an universal and bloody Persecution, and upon that an universal Defection, or Apostacy from the Faith: And if so, continued I, pray who can be those Persecutors but *R. C—s*, and those Apostates but *Pr—s*? Upon which, one of the Company smiling; Nay, said I, possibly I mind Prophecies as little as either of you, for I do not understand them; and *Grotius*, I think, says well, that the Design of Prophecy is not so much to make known what is to come to pass, as to convince Men of Providence, by showing them when the Thing is come, that it was fore-known.

However (I added) both you and I have read *Prideaux*, and must acknowledge, that some plain Prophecies, as of *Cyrus* by Name, of *Babielshazzar*, of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and such like, have exactly and undeniably had their Accomplishments; with which *Porphiry*, the most dangerous Enemy that Christianity ever had, was so struck, that contrary to all History and Chronology, not knowing what else to say or think, he would have the Prophecy of *Cyrus* to have been forged after his death; but enough of this, said I. Nay, pray go on, said your Friend laughing, since you are so learn'd. I had, said I, but a Word more to add, which was, that the same Divines had further told me, that it was upon the

the Consideration first mention'd, and the crumbling of those of the Separation into such a multitude of Sects, (that many of our Reformers, and several of their Followers since their time, (Men distinguish'd for their Piety and Learning) came first to apprehend a return of *Poper*y, and at last to be fully persuaded of it, and to die of that mind: But to make you no more merry with my Divinity, I'll leave that Argument to the management of the Divines I had it from.

I have other Reasons, that I am more Master, and you better Judges of, that make me fully of that mind. Pray, by all means, let us have these, said they. No, said I, they are not a proper Subject for Diversion, which seems to be your present Disposition; and when you are in earnest, you need only reflect on the History of the two last Centuries, to work them out of your own Thoughts. Upon this I arose, to go away; but your Friend begg'd my Pardon, and laying hold on me, said, I should not go, till at least I had given them Hints of the Heads of them, that we may turn our Thoughts in good earnest upon the Subject in these Holidays: for, added he, a Man is indeed never so effectually convinc'd, as by Reasons of his own Brain; for Controversy begets Contradiction, which ends in a wrangle and loss of Temper. You see I am in earnest now, and you will find me more so at our next meeting, if you will but put me in the way of thinking on a Subject, which I have no Notion of, having never had the least Apprehension of Danger from *Poper*y;

for I was a Boy that fear'd nothing; When
Popery was on the Throne.

Well, Sir, said I, since you'll have it so, I'll
 give you a Sketch of my Plan in general, which
 you may draw out at your own Conveniency.
 I have had the matter long in my Head;
 long before the business of *Thorn*, and have
 rang'd and distributed my Reasons into two
 Classes.

Those in the first, are founded upon the
 Nature of Things, by which I understand
 the different Natures of the two Spirits, that
 of *Popery*, (or indeed, that of the Court of
Rome) and that of the *Reformation*, (or strictly
 speaking, of the People reform'd) and conse-
 quently the different manner of acting of those
 two Spirits; but all the Use I make of the
 Reasons of the first Class, is only to render
 the Event in question highly probable.

My Reasons of the second Class are founded
 upon one single Fact, and the Grounds or
 Causes of that Fact; but which, if they con-
 tinue, and consequently the Fact be repeated
 on, as; if so, it must be, I pretend will render
 the Event, morally speaking, certain and un-
 doubted.

The Fact is, that the *Reformation*, having
 made its greatest Progress in the Reign of
Q. Elizabeth, in the 16th Century, and ad-
 vanc'd on to the highest Pitch it has ever at-
 tain'd to, towards the End of that Century,
 and the Beginning of the next, when she died,
 and the *Scotch* Race succeeded her, hath ever
 since retrograded, and lost in the 17th Centu-
 ry, about half of the Territory, and Numbers,
 which it had gain'd in the 16th: Whereas

Popery

Papery hath not lost one Foot of Ground since her death, except some *Bishopricks* by the Peace of *Munster*.

Upon this I proceed first to establish the Fact, and then what I take to be the true Reasons of it; for such there must be; there is no Effect without a Cause: but whether the Reasons I give be the true Reasons, or not, it's no great matter, my Conclusion is equally strong, that be those true Reasons what they will, if they be not remov'd, but do still subsist and hold in this 18th Century, they will infallibly operate, as they have done in the 17th; and the Event in question, as I have told you, becomes morally certain and unavoidable.

Now I smoke you, said your Friend, and am so much in earnest, that, if you please, I'll wait on you to-morrow, to hear you talk over this matter; and pray Mr. *Freeborn* (said Mr. *Churchill*, a Relation of his, who only was present) speak to Mr. *Lowman*, whom I am a stranger to, that he'll allow me to go along with you: to which I frankly agreed. Their Relation and Concerns seem to unite them; but being both of the same warm Tempers, and of quite different Thoughts, or Byasses, they live, as it's like you know, in a perpetual Jangle.

Accordingly we met at my House the next day, and had no sooner sat down than *Churchill*, of whom I had got the Character of an honest, but high-flown, inflexible Man, began by expressing his Apprehensions, that I would load the Family of the *Stuarts*, both with the Stop that had been put to the Progress

gress of the Reformation, and with its going back, as it had done in the 17th Century, so long as they kept on the Throne : The four Kings, he said, no doubt, I meant, who had succeeded one another. This Precipitancy, I own, did not a little surprize me, which your Friend observing, he with some warmth ask'd Mr. Churchill, why he had desired to be present ; did he think it possible for me, or any Man that had read the History of the last Age, to talk of the Losses the Reformation had then suffer'd, and not charge, at least the Courts of those Princes with them, for betraying, or call it abandoning, the Interest of it ? And indeed, how could it be otherwise ? Were not the two Seconds R—— C——s ? the one who had Religion, honestly and fairly owning it ; and the other dissembling on, with God and Man, till a Death-bed forced him to declare it : *Popery* being, indeed, the most complaisant Religion for deluding a Man with the false Hopes of jumping out of a bad Life into *Abraham's Bosom*. And as for the two Firsts, who can have read *Wynwood's Memoirs*, and doubt any more what *D'Ageant*, and the Archbishop of *D'Ambrun* publish'd long ago of our *Solomon*, who had told the Archbishop that he had ever been popishly inclin'd, even from his Infancy ; which his *Scotch Subjects* having discover'd, he (K. 3.) said, had therefore design'd to have assassinated him ; and he engag'd solemnly to the Archbishop, to declare himself, the Year before his death ; and it's like would have done it, had he liv'd longer ; or could he have prevail'd with his Brother of *Denmark*, whom he got

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to come to *England* for other pretended Reasons, to join with him in doing it. And tho' neither C——s the First, nor Abp *Laud* his Church-Favourite, had any Disposition to *Papery*; the Queen and *Buckingham*, his yet greater Favourite, supply'd the want of it, as to all Intents and Purposes, favourable to those of that Church, whether at Home or Abroad, as the *French* Protestants, and those of *Ireland* felt: His Grace, indeed, of *Buckingham*, had no Religion, but indulg'd his Passions as Favourites usually do; however, besides that his Family was R. C——s, he had also promis'd to *D'Ambrun* to declare himself. But this, said he, I'll undertake for my Friend, (turning to me) that he'll keep to the Rules of Decency, and good Manners, in speaking of Crown'd Heads. No, Sir, said I to him, you shall not undertake for me; for tho' it be my way to do, as you are pleas'd to say, the Subject is too provoking, and Mr. *Churchill* too tender, I perceive, for me to undertake, even for myself. I own, said Mr. *Churchill*, I cannot be present at disturbing the Ashes of the Dead. Then you cannot read, said your Friend, the Old Testament, where Truth is recorded both of bad and good Princes; even the Murders and Adulteries of those according to God's own Heart: And what other Hold, said our late excellent Queen *Mary*, have People of their Princes, but by the Love they, as well as other Men, have for their Reputations whilst they live, and for their Memories after their death.— Upon this said Mr. *Churchill*, And yet she was one of the *Stuarts*; and arose to be gone, when I told him, that I was sorry
for

for this Heat amongst us, at our very first meeting; but that he, Mr. *Churchill*, must allow me to tell him, that he had unnecessarily given rise to it, otherwise there would have been no occasion for it at present; for I could hardly, at this meeting, go through my Reasons of the first Class, which gave me no opportunity to talk either good or bad of the *Stuarts*. Upon this he cooled. Nay, said he, if this be the Case, and that my Friend will forgive me, for putting him in a heat, and allow me to stay, I'll be glad to hear you, and to hear you out, without interrupting you; for believe me, I am as good a Protestant as any of you; tho' I am not against every thing barely because it comes from *Rome*. Nay, said Mr. *Freeborn*, if you'll promise me to be but against one thing from *Rome*, I'll forgive your being what else you please. Here *Churchill* turning to me, Pray begin, said he, that my Friend's mouth may be shut. Upon which I did begin.

My Reasons, said I, of the first Class, that render the return of *Popery* highly probable, consist, as I told you, in the differences betwixt the Spirit of *Popery*, and that of the *Reformation*, and the Consequences of those Differences.

The first Difference that I chuse to insist on, is, That the Spirit of *Popery* being founded on blind, implicit Faith, and consequently on absolute Obedience, naturally begets Submission and Union; whereas that of the *Reformation* being founded on Conscience or private Judgment, as naturally begets difference of Opinion, or Disunion: which, as it hath been
manag'd,

manag'd, hath not stopt at Rancour and Heart-burning, but proceeded to Schism and Faction, and Persecution; which you know, Mr. *Churchill*, you and your Friends, as aham'd of it, and disowning it, have call'd Prosecution, &c. But call it what you will, Words do not alter the Nature of Things, the Consequences have been the same, to wit, Quarrels and Blood; and will ever be so, unless we bear with one another: for tho' Obedience be every where the Rule, Ruin will always be the Exception.

But nothing of all this, neither Schism, nor the Consequences of Schism, hath happen'd amongst the *R. C*——s, at least since the Reformation, that hath made them wise to bear with one another in their Differences of Opinion, which they have amongst their learned Men, upon Subjects of the highest Importance: as for instance, about their great Fundamental, which all is built upon, where to lodge the Infallibility; and the reason of this is, that they have at *Rome* a wise, standing Authority, to which they all submit, and which interposes, and either decides the Difference, or stifles it in its Infancy, and there's an end of it; or only prevents its spreading, by keeping their Controversies within the Walls of their Colleges, or Universities; and in a Language unknown to the People: Or, if those Differences happen to spread, and that great Numbers engage in them, they are sure not to decide them, and make Articles of Faith of them; and consequently to take care, that for the preventing of Schism, such Subjects be neither directly, nor indirectly part of the Terms of
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their Communion. Thus, no such Differences keep them from going to *Mass* together ; nor from being ready to join upon all Occasions in their Zeal for the common Interest.

Whereas all hath fall'n out contrariwise amongst the *Protestants* : They have no common Authority to interpose in their Differences, and either to prevent or stifle them, before they spread amongst their People ; nor have they had, till of late, the Wisdom to tolerate them, when they were once spread, and no more to be rooted out ; but have then most fatally made Decisions of them, and put those Decisions amongst their Articles of Faith, and consequently, for the most part, amongst their Terms of Communion with one another. Thus rendring Separation, or Schism unavoidable, which hath terminated in more Rancour and Heart-burning (not to say worse) amongst themselves, than against their common Enemy ; and hath made them often idle Spectators of one another's Ruin ; it being thus a more easy matter for the *R. C—s* to make their whole Strength bear against any one Part of the Reformation, than for that Part either to procure Assistance, or to defend itself alone.

Thus whoever reflects on the past Age, cannot but observe the *Protestant* Interest going Piece-meal to ruin, Member after Member being torn from the Body, and yet the Body itself appearing as it were benumb'd, or void of Sense and Feeling. Whereas upon the passing of an Act here, to other day, which is indeed a Favour done the *R. C—s*, if it make them wise, as it is intended, and not to think to plot on, trusting to the Non-execution of the Laws,

as they did, and might well do in the Reigns of our pretended *Protestant* Princes, whom they knew to be Body and Soul theirs : We hear, I say, Council upon Councils at work to save them ; as if we had also amongst us *Auto de Fee's*, as they have in *Spain* and *Portugal*, and *Tribunals* every where ; not indeed so pompous and barbarous, but which do the Work of Blood as effectually.

It's impossible, without Indignation and Regret, to reflect on the Infatuation of the *Protestants*, that instead of making their Articles and Terms of those Positives, in which they and the *R. C*——s agree, in order to gain them ; or if to keep them out, tho' not so very agreeably to the Doctrine and Example of our Saviour, they would needs add Negatives, they should have done it only of those Articles, which all *Protestants* agree in, to be the Grounds of their Separation from *Popery* : Thus to have preserv'd Union in Worship, and the common Interest.

But that instead of this, the Terms of their Communion, as if they had been directed by the Court of *Rome*, have been expressly calculated not for Union amongst themselves, but for Schism, or Division and Separation from one another ; and therefore, instead of taking Example from the Wisdom of the *R. C*——s, (the Children of this Generation, that are wiser, &c.) in not deciding such Differences that might give birth to Schisms, the *Protestants* have not only decided such like Differences amongst them, but, as it were, to ensure Schism and Faction, have made the Subject of those Differences part of the Articles of their Faith,

and generally speaking, of the Terms of their Communion, and without any Necessity at all that oblig'd them to do so.

Was not the Real Presence of the same individual Human Nature's being in Heaven, and in the Sacrament at the same time, in which both Parties in *Germany* were agreed, Mystery or unintelligible enough, but that Presence must be christen'd *Consubstantiation*, to be a Mill-stone hung on the Protestant Interest there, which has more than once endanger'd the sinking of it.

Had not the Disputes in *Holland* too, about the Decrees, and other Unsearchables, and the Decisions of them at *Dort*, almost dissolv'd the Union of the Provinces; and indeed would have lost the Seven, as many of their People, as the D. of *Alva*, by his Violence and mad Zeal, had drove out of the Ten, had not Prince *Maurice* and his Designs gone opportunely off the Stage, and made room for his Brother's Moderation? And yet the Subject of all the Fire that was rais'd, is no more intelligible, than *Consubstantiation*, or *Transubstantiation* itself; nor indeed of any more use in humane Life: for Men may talk and think as they please, but sure they never govern themselves by such Metaphysics, of which they neither have, nor can have any Notion: And the Country Fellow was in the right, who told his Parson, after a high-flown Sermon, that he had done better to have told his Parish what it was that God would have them to do now, to please him, than what God had been resolving and doing long ago, thousands of Years before either he or they were born.

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And now, said Mr. *Freeborn*, (begging my Pardon) what a noble Dispute have we had in these Kingdoms, that hath cost so much Blood, and a *Scotch* King, (added he, looking to Mr. *Churchill*, the far best, he own'd, of the four) his Life on a Scaffold, to wit, which of the two Forms of Church-Government, a Parity or a Hierarchy, had the *Jus divinum* on its side, taking it for granted, that one or other of the two had it? Whereas it is evident that neither of them has it; our Saviour having no more prescrib'd any particular Form of Church-Government than of Civil Government, but left both to the Prudence of Mankind. And what was more easy than to have been convinc'd of this, had not the contrary been a *Postulatium*, a Relique of *Popery*, which no Church, nor Congregation neither, will part with; for where are those Texts to make it out? And it's strange that the Judgment of the most famous of the Reformers, both at home and abroad, and of others since their time, had no weight with us to prevent this ridiculous Controversy, like that which cost so much Blood, who should have the white Elephant, when, after all, there was no such Elephant to be found, nor indeed in being. Shall I name, continu'd he, a few of them from the *Irenicum*, that unanswerable Book, which the Author was forced to retract (but not to refute, tho' challeng'd to do it, he and all Mankind could not do that) to make his peace with your Church, Mr. *Churchill*, who had therefore given him the Exclusion from being a Bishop; whereas he deserv'd for that very Work, to have been Bishop of the Universe? I'll name a few upon my Memory,
for

for I have not the Book by me : *Luther, Calvin, Beza, Chemnitius, Hemingius, Bochart, Amirald, Blondel, Grotius, Salmafius, &c.* and in these Kingdoms, *Cranmer*, and other Bishops ; as *Jewel, &c. Hooker, Usher, Hales, Chillingworth, Bacon, Selden*, and Numbers more, who have all own'd, in their Writings, that in their Judgment our Saviour had prescrib'd no particular Form of Church-Government. But pray go on, said here Mr. *Freeborn* to me.

Now such, said I, are the three Subjects of Dispute, that have endanger'd the whole Reformation in these Kingdoms, and in *Germany*, and *Holland*, being made a part of the Articles of Faith, and Terms of Communion in all those Countries : and consequently the Cause of all the Schisms, and Factions, and of the most part of the other Evils that have happen'd ; by which means, those of the Reformation have been disabled, and indisposed too, not only to act, but indeed to defend themselves against the common Enemy ; their whole Spirit and Vigour being spent and exhausted in maintaining those Differences amongst themselves.

It's amazing to look back in cold Blood, and suppose even Fact possible ; for tho', on one hand, the fatal Consequences of such Proceedings were obvious, and daily felt, yet, on the other hand, no Remedy to this day has been found practicable. *Titus*, at the Siege of *Jerusalem*, took Wall after Wall, but all this could not reconcile the Parties within : *Popery* gives Blow upon Blow to the Reformation, but nothing, it seems, can make those of it wise ; tho' *Popery* has nothing in it of the Christian Spirit, I may well call it, of *Titus*, but a Spirit as

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contrary to that of our Saviour, as that of *Antichrist* himself, be he the same, or who he will, can possibly be : and indeed, nothing is more evident in *Euclid*, than that if our Saviour was in the right, *Popery* must be in the wrong.

I will add but one thing more upon this Head, continu'd I, to wit, a sensible Proof that, as those Contentions, or Controversies, have had numberless bad Consequences, the not having had such Disputes, could have had no bad Consequences at all ; and my Proof is a Question which I put to any impartial Man : If he thinks Christianity this day upon a worse Foot in *England*, because they have not had amongst them, at least to a degree of Schism, those Disputes in *Holland* about *ab Eterno's*, and the other unsearchable Springs of the Motions of the Heart of Man, and such a party, political Synod as that of *Dort*, to decide them, and however good, (said *Freeborn*) the Meaning of many of the blind-folded Members of it was, in effect to seal those Decrees of theirs with the Blood of *Barnavelt*, the Father of his Country : And, continu'd I, if the *Dutch* were worse Christians, for not having had *Consubstantiation*, and her Attendance, sail down the *Rhine*, or the *Elb*, to their Country ; or the *Germans* worse Christians for not having contended and fought for the white Elephant ?

Here I stopp'd, and told them that I was weary with speaking, but that they might take their Turn ; I was ready to hear them.

Upon this Invitation of them to speak, Well, said *Freeborn* to *Churchill*, you have been very attentive ; pray, what say you to all this ? Say to it, said *Churchill*, why, I am sorry for it :

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it is but too too true, for the most part; however, I must own, that some things have been said, which I cannot so well down with; not that I will engage in any Debate, but only propose my Doubts, that at least I may be sure of Mr. Lowman's true Meaning.

For instance, he owns, That the Spirit of *Popery* is much wiser than that of the *Reformation*; now, is not this subject to bad Consequences, and will it not be to the R. C——s matter of Triumph? Hitherto I had thought that our Church of *England* was the wisest Church in the World, when it was itself, and had Countenance and Authority on its Side, to suppress Sects and Heresies, the Spots and Blemishes that fully it. I know not, indeed, what it is now that—— No; said *Freeborn*, interrupting him, I can no more hear you reflecting unjustly upon the present Government, than you can hear Mr. Lowman telling Truth of the *Stuarts*. You mistake me, said *Churchill*, I was not to speak of your Government, but of our Church, that I knew it no more now, that they had thrown off their Principles both of *Loyalty* and *Religion*, having explain'd away their former Oaths, and living with the *Dissenters* as Brethren; or Children of the same Mother, which, the time was, they abhor'd the thought of: But I'll go on, and pray hear me out, and you shall then say what you please.

To want of Wisdom, among the Reformed, has not Mr. Lowman added the great want of a standing Authority, or supreme Judge, to interpose and decide Controversies; and does not this give Strength to the popish Argument, that
such

Such a Judge being necessary, our Saviour, who had left nothing undone that was necessary for his Church, must needs have appointed and qualify'd one for that Work. I own, continued he, some of the R. C. have carried this Argument too far; to wit, to the making a particular Man, or Sett and Succession of Men, or Assembly of them, infallible: but I have always apprehended that we have not carried it far enough to the establishing the Authority of the Church, upon a foot equivalent to Infallibility, as to all the Effects of Peace and Union, that is, to a degree of Power and Dignity, to which all Men should find themselves oblig'd to submit. And, indeed, how can Sects and Heresies be otherwise prevented or suppress'd? And what occasion would there be for private Conscience, and Judgment of Discretion, that confound all Government both in Church and State, was there a publick Conscience, and a publick Judgment declared and establish'd by Authority? Nor can the Bulk of Mankind judge of Controversy, having neither Capacity nor Time for doing it.

And pray tell me, added he, what Answer I shall give to my popish Neighbours, who upbraid me daily, that we Protestants, at the same time that we reject a living Judge of Controversy, have set up the dumb, or dead Letter of the Scriptures, to supply the want of him? that we may as well, say they, hang up the Statute-book in *Westminster-Hall*, to decide all Suits there, and send the Judges a packing. Here Mr. *Freeborn* could not hold: It appears, said he to *Churchill*, what Company

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you keep. Why, I own, said *Churchill*, that I live neighbourly with my R. C. Neighbours; what hurt is there in that? None at all, said *Freeborn*, unless you plot with them to bring their Religion on the Throne, which is to serve them more effectually than to be of it; nay, than to believe the whole Legend; but which is, indeed, in some Sense pardonable in them, but in no Sense in you. I'll take care not to be at your mercy, said *Churchill*, in great heat. Upon which I interpos'd, and blamed *Freeborn* for interrupting Mr. *Churchill*; and I pray'd him to go on.

Upon this he turning to me, You have ascribed, said he, in a great measure, the Sects, those Divisions, and Sub-divisions, by which, you say, the *Reformation* has been torn in pieces, and almost ruin'd, to the want of a wise and standing Authority, to interpose; to which, indeed, you owe them, and to Mr. *Freeborn's* Idol of Toleration, that has spawn'd them all; which, I thank God, I could never with patience bear the thought of; nor indeed mix with any of her spurious Breed. I would not take a Wife amongst the *Dissenters*, had she a Million: I am resolv'd to die, as I have lived, of the Church of *England*; I mean, the Church that was: She is now, indeed, like *Calvin's* invisible Church; I hardly know where to find her. But should I ever quit her Communion, I'll turn *Roman*, rather than *Presbyterian*, I promise you. I will be neither, said *Freeborn*, tho' there be no comparison of Education, or Faction; or the Weakness and Humour of the little narrow Party-spirit, on one side, with Wickedness and Tyranny; and, in

that I a word, *Antichristianism*, or all that's contrary
ours; to the Character and Spirit, as well as
l, said the Doctrine and Example of our Saviour, on
bring the other. But have you done, Mr. *Churchill*?
serve I have, said he.

Well then, pray hear me with as much Pa-
ience as I have heard you; I ask no more:
Nor will I keep you long; for I will not dip
into the Chicane; Mr. *Lowman* is more ready
at that than I am. Nor have I Temper, I
own, for such Stuff with which the Priests
catch Boys and Servant-maids, or other weak,
illiterate People.

I own, Mr. *Churchill*, that I have ever,
and do still reckon you an honest Man,
and no R. C. nor Friend to them, that you
know of; but as I used to say, half Jest,
half Earnest, I did take you to be of *Suffolk*,
capable of ruining your Religion, as *Papery*
on the Throne then did, and will ever do, and
at the same time of going to the Stake, with
the Regret of having done it. No, no, said
Churchill, no Stake, nor Consequences, shall
ever hinder me from doing my Duty, or make
me repent of having done it; the *Suffolk* Men
were in the right first and last: I don't believe
that they repented at their Deaths the doing
of what they had done. Well, said *Freeborn*,
since you love your Duty so well, which I don't
controvert, how come you not to be better ap-
priz'd of it, than you seem to be? Why, have
you never read *Laud* (whom you esteem so
much) against *Fisher*, who was as much for
Church-Authority, and against all Sects, as
ever any Protestant was; and he has pull'd up
by the Roots all those Chicanes about true

and catholick Church, damnable Schism, infallible Judge, &c. the Snares which weak Protestants are usually catch'd in, and that seem still to stick with you. It is indeed an excellent Book, and shows that he was a Man of a distinct and clear Head. Ay, said *Churchill*, but you, and your Fanaticks clear'd that Head of his which you now praise, from off his Shoulders. I own indeed, with my Lord *Clarendon*, that he was a Bookish Man, and not fit for Government; but that was a sorry Reason to take his Head off. No, answered *Freeborn*, the Fanaticks had not got the Ascendant then; it was the Parliament that took his Life; not for his Unfitness for Government, but for the eminent Share he had had in those Transactions, which Lord *Clarendon*, and *Echard*, and others of your Party, own now to have been Breaches in the Constitution. Here *Churchill* was upon the point to reply with heat, (as he after told me) that nothing had been done but by the advice of the Judges, (the only pretence left to palliate the Matter, cried *Freeborn*, upon another occasion) when I dreading both their Passions, prevented them, and indeed calm'd them: Had I been his Judge; said I, for the sake of that very Book, which has kept many a good, tho' weak Protestant, from returning to *Rome*; would I have condemned him to his Cloister, which it was a pity he had ever left; and I would have engaged the old Man to have died quietly in his Calling, I mean in writing us some such other useful Book: but Mr. *Freeborn* pray go on. Nay, said he to me, you can defend what you have said better than I can do: however,

since

since it is for your Ease, I will do the best I can; and when you have had a little more time to breathe, you will come to my Assistance.

It is true, Mr. Churchill, as you say, that Mr. Lowman did own, that the Spirit of Popery was much wiser than that of the Reformation, and that there wanted amongst the Reformers and Reformed, a standing Authority to determine Differences, which the Spirit of Popery had: and thus he proved his Point; to wit, that we were in great Danger of Popery, the truth of what he own'd naturally tending to have such an Effect; but his owning it was subject to no bad Consequences, and tended only to have Protestants more cautious, and upon their guard; and to be at least as wise as they could well be: And what did he own, but that the Court of Rome was wiser or greater Politicians than the People of the Reformation; he might have added, than the Courts and States too, of the Reformed, and indeed, than those of all Europe, R. C——s, as well as Protestants. Nor can this seem strange, if we consider, that there is in that Court a standing Wisdom and Authority that never die, that Court being compos'd of a Senate of 60 or 70 old Men, many of them above that Age, that have been bred up to Business, from their Infancy; and Business of the greatest Importance transacted by them, generally speaking, at the most part of the Courts of Europe: and this Senate under one Head of their own choosing, and supplied not by Succession, but by a Choice made by that Head; and all of them of one and the same Spirit; for they have but one

one and the same common Interest, which is to maintain the Grandeur and Dignity they are in, by the same Maxims and Rules of Government by which their Predecessors acquir'd it; and by which, when the carnal Weapon, the *Roman* temporal Sword could cut no longer, and govern the World, they, with the Wisdom of the *Serpent*, did substitute in the place of it, the *Sword of the Spirit*, as they call it; that is, a few tortur'd Texts, with Stories and Miracles of their own forging, with which they have govern'd the World above a thousand Years without controul, 'till about two Hundred Years ago, that too much Prosperity had turn'd their Heads, but the Check they then met with, has restor'd them to their Senses again: All which, it must be own'd, shows a Superiority of Genius in the *Italians*; a Superiority, it must be in their Climate and Soil, which makes them excel in whatever they take themselves to; as they do at present in Musick, and other Pleasures of the Senses (that there are not even Words for, in any Language but their own) and with which they captivate Mankind, as well as in Plots and Machinations, with which they govern them, and plague them.

But, Mr. *Churchill*, nothing of this interferes with what you say, and which Mr. *Lowman* will tell you, he agrees to, that our own Church is the wisest, and he'll add too, the best of any he knows; not with the wordly Wisdom, in which, it's own'd, *Poper*y excels, but with the Wisdom that belongs to a Church, I mean as you do, the Clergy, to wit, the Knowledge of the Scriptures, and Fathers, and Councils, and Controversy; and of their Duty to their Flocks,
thos^c

those God has put under their Care, and given them the Charge of.

Here Mr. *Freeborn* stopp'd, praying me to mind any thing which he had forgot, to satisfy his Friend in. Nay, said Mr. *Churchill* to him, I am in amaze to hear you say so much as you have done; you who indeed keep the Church, but what Church you are of, or if you are of any Church, God knows: I have known you *Lutheran* in *Germany*, *Calvinist* at *Geneva*, and when we rambled into *Scotland*, as rank a *Presbyterian* as any there. Pray, Mr. *Lowman*, said *Freeborn*, let all this pass; for it amounts only to my joining in Worship with all Church Establishments, that oblige me to nothing contrary to my Opinion. No, go on to what Mr. *Churchill* said, which I do not distinctly remember, of the Necessity of an infallible Judge, and of our making the Bible the sole Judge of Controversy. Right, said *Churchill*, I want indeed to be satisfied in those two Points.

Upon this I own'd, that an infallible Judge, in Matters of Religion, would be of great use, and so would one in Civil Matters too; but as our Saviour hath not appointed the one, so neither has God appointed the other; and to say, they ought to have done it, is to arraign them for not doing it; which sure they would have done, had it been necessary; but so far it is from being so, that were it done, it could signify nothing, unless such Judges were born with Marks on their Foreheads, to distinguish them. And, indeed, supposing the *Pope* such a one, the Doctrine of Intention makes it impossible to know who is a Canonical *Pope*, and indeed, to know who is a Christian among the

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R. C—r. And to put Church-Authority upon the foot of such a Judge, as Mr. Churchill would have done, by making absolute Obedience due to it, is to condemn the Reformation, and, indeed, to render all Reformations impracticable. No, God has made the World, and Mankind such as they are; and we are not to pretend to mend them, by making them over again.

As to the other Point, I frankly own'd also, that the Protestants often express'd themselves carelessly in calling the Scriptures the sole Judge of Controversy; but that their Meaning was, and so they always explain themselves, that the Scriptures were the sole Rule by which Controversies were to be judg'd, but judged not by the Clergy, or Church-Officers alone; but by the Christian Church itself, the Nation, or Legislature; and, indeed, by every Man's Conscience, who cannot agree to the Judgment of his Country; as the Law is the Rule by which the Judges are to decide Causes. And for every private Man, you should add, cry'd Churchill, to decide them too, when he does not agree to the Judgment of the Bench, which sure he'll never do, added he, when it is against himself. No, not so fast, said I; a Man can submit and conform himself to a Judgment he thinks wrong; but may upon no Terms act against his Conscience.

Here Mr. Freeborn interrupted me; Enough, said he, what Mr. Churchill said last, was for talking sake; he knows he was in the wrong; pray go on to what more you have to tell us, of your Reasons of the first Class; for I long to hear you on the second. No, said I, we can-

cannot go thorough those of the first Class at this meeting ; but in order to shorten our next Conference, I can now state the Subject of it, and discuss one Part of that Subject.

I proceed then to the next great Difference betwixt the two Spirits, that of *Popery* requires absolute Subjection, and Obedience, without reserve of Thought, Word, or Deed ; and therefore removes all Opposition *per fas aut nefas*, either by destroying those of it, or by converting them, which is indeed corrupting them, and rendring them worse than themselves, as our Saviour says the *Pharisees* did their *Profelytes* : for no regard is had to the inward Man, their Consciences, whether these be changed or not ; but only to the outward Man, their external Profession and Behaviour. Whereas the Spirit of the *Reformation* is, or should be, satisfied with Submission to the Civil Government, and makes, or should make Allowance for private Conscience, or a Judgment of Discretion, and a Worship suitable to it : In a word, is, or should be for a Toleration. Thus bearing with Opposition without using Violence, or other means, (as artificial, political Conversions) contrary to the Character, and Doctrine, and Practice of our Saviour. But I'll only add a few words at present, of the difference betwixt the two Spirits, in their converting Talents, to show the Danger we are in of *Popery* in that respect, reserving the difference of the sanguinary and tolerating Spirits, and the much greater Danger we are in upon that head, to our next meeting ; at which all that has been said, or that I am to say now, will appear as nothing in comparison of what I have to say then.

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But to have done now, it is undeniable Matter of Fact, that the Spirit of *Popery* has much greater Success in making Profelytes, than that of the *Reformation*; and it is obvious that it cannot be otherwise.

First, the Spirit of *Popery* is much more zealous (as Error is always more bigot than Truth) and consequently, is more industrious and indefatigable than the other, which is at no Trouble or Pains at all, as appears by the Numbers of a Million in *Ireland*, and 3 or 400,000 *R. C——s*, in the *Seven Provinces*, which now near 200 Years that they have been under the Power and Government of Protestants, have not sensibly diminish'd.

In the next place the *R. C——s* make use of all means lawful, or unlawful, Truth and Falshood, Chicane and Argument, Fraud or Art, Force or Violence, Threats and Promises, Heaven and Hell; in a word, of all Engines of Torture and Fire, Sword and Ruin; and all other Artifices and Devices imaginable, that can work either on the Body or Mind of a Man; on his Hopes and Fears, his Senses or Reason; and this without any other regard than to get their Converts to be of their Communion, whether converted in their Minds, or not, is to them all one; the next Generation, say they, will be all good *R. C——s*; which was the usual Apology at the Court of ———— for their Dragooning, in which they proceeded so grossly, and with so little Shame, that even in their *Gazettes* it was declar'd, that the Dragoons having converted whole Towns and Provinces, Orders were thereupon given to their Clergy, to go and instruct their New
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Converts. Whereas, on the other hand, the Protestants, in all Places where they have Power, use no Force to convert People; but tolerate them, at least, in the private Exercise of their Religion, and indeed use no other Means but laudable ones; those of Reason and Argument: Nay, hardly will they be at the trouble of using these, which I am far from commending them for; but which still makes the Danger we are in from them the greater.

In the third place, as to Reason and Argument, or the Controversy, tho' the Protestants have infinitely the Advantage of the R. C——s from the Merits of the Cause; and consequently at all close fighting: Or when the Debate turns upon the particular Subjects of Difference, and is manag'd by Men of Knowledge on both sides; yet it must be own'd, that the R. C——s are far superior in the Art (I should say Artifices) of managing the Controversy, especially when they have to do with ignorant or illiterate People, such as are the Bulk of Mankind, with whom their Custom is to deal in Generals, where there is room for Sophistry and Chicane, of which they are great Masters; having whole Societies educated and form'd for the purpose, whose Business and Interest, and Vain-glory it is, to mind no other thing.

Thus, when the Debate is upon particular Subjects of Difference, as the denying the People the Cup, and the Use of the Scriptures, and the Service in a known Tongue; or about Image-worship, the Invocation of Saints, the Doctrine of Intention, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and Transubstantiation, of Purgatory, and the selling of a By-road to shun it, or of a short

Stay in it, nay, the selling of Heaven itself; with a Licence to Sin, or a Lease of Remissions of Sins for a Term of Years, with a Power of renewing, &c. then the Priest is at a stand: And how can it be otherwise, so long as the *Protestants* have the Scriptures in their hands; and that the *R. C.* own the Scriptures to be so far a Rule, at least, that nothing contrary to them can be Matter of Faith. And, indeed, the Use of the Scriptures, and the Use of our Senses, both in reading them, and in distinguishing Bread and Wine from Flesh and Blood, as well as Liberty from Slavery, that all must see, who have Eyes to see, to be the natural Consequence of *Popery*; I take to be the two great Bulwarks of the *Reformation*: And the denying Mankind the Use of their Senses in both these respects, to be a Mill-stone hung on *Popery*, that must sink it at last, when their Cup is full.

But an artful Priest never suffers the Debate to come to Particulars, till he has first made sure Work, and holds his Patient fast by Generals of true and catholick Church, out of which there's no Salvation; of damnable Schism, and infallible Judge, and so forth, by which he blind-folds his Patient: and having thus frightened him out of his Wits, he convinces him that as to Difficulties in particulars, he, the Patient, is equally concern'd with him (the Priest) to find Solutions for them; unless he will, as he advises him, submit his Judgment entirely to the Church, and give himself no further trouble in the matter: However, to please him, he helps him to some Varnish to smooth all over.

Thus:

Thus, upon the whole matter, the Patient being made to believe, that he is out of the true Church that cannot err, and which only can save; and consequently that he is in a State of Damnation, he is at once, and by the lump, made to throw away all the knowledge he ever had of the Scriptures, or particular Controversies, as well as the Use of his Reason; nay, and of his Senses too in all such Matters.

It's incredible how such Artifices prevail: I am apt to think that the single *Paralogism*, or deceitful Argument, that it is surer, and consequently safer to be a R. C. whom both *Papists* and *Protestants* own to be in a State (or possibility) of Salvation, than to be a *Protestant*, whom the R. C.—s make to be in an actual State of Damnation, and out of the Possibility of being saved; has alone, since *Henry IV's* Time, proved the Handle for debauching more Protestants from their Principles, than the Protestants have, since that time, converted of R. C.—s, by all Arguments whatsoever: and yet what is in itself more frivolous? as has been a million of times shown, and which indeed proves only that the Protestants are the better Christians of the two, as having in them more of the true Characteristick of Christianity than the other, that is, of *Charity*, (without which, all signifies nothing, says the Apostle) or Caution, and Tenderness to set Bounds to the Goodness and Mercy of God. And thus any arrogant or bigot Pagan may prove his Religion preferable to Christianity; and any arrogant, or bigot Protestant, may shut the Priest's Mouth, by giving him to the Devil too. However, such Reasoning is what it has been, and will

remain to be, a Hook fit for the Mob of Missionaries to catch with, and for the other Mob of Protestants to be catch'd by; but was unbecoming and unpardonable in a Prince, who, had he not fought better than he argued, had never been King of France: And pray, what got he after all, by his prevaricating both with God and Man, but what *a* *Aubigne* forewarn'd him of?

But I have done: And, said Mr. Churchill, I agree to every Word of what you have said; and can convince you at another time, that we are losing daily more of our People, than possibly you imagine: And that you have not at all touch'd upon the main Argument, by which, of late, they are seduced, and which I own is but too well grounded: But go on in your own Way, said he to me, and at the same time engag'd us both to sup with him the next Night. But then let us meet in the Afternoon, said Mr. Freeborn, that Mr. Lowman may have finish'd what he has more to say of his Reasons of the first Class before Supper; for as I have often told you, I long to hear those of the second: which being agreed to, we parted.

F I N I S.

